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ABSTRACT

In the United States, where printed literature is the primary vehicle of myth, the journalist plays a critical role as creator and perpetuator of myth through the narrative form. Narratives of fiction or fact express the traditions and metaphors of a particular culture and transform archetypal myths into myths unique to that culture. A comparison of American cultural myths with newspaper feature stories reveals their shared qualities of a sense of timelessness, repetitiousness, and reaffirmation of the values that define and direct cultural conduct. The realism of feature stories recasts abiding myths in contemporary form. From examples drawn from the "Washington Post," one can observe that the journalist neither establishes nor recharts mythic consciousness, but fulfills the social obligations established for the myth. Although a feature story may depict a world alien to that of its readers, their values are generally upheld rather than disputed by the depiction. Feature stories, like all popular art, are designed to sell, and thus conform to popular values and images. Several critics contend that the audience's need for myth is exploited by the press and leads to deceptive reporting. They also cite a disparity between newspaper stories and the actual experiences of those who read them. But their cultural analysis only stresses the role of the newspaper as a disseminator of information and overlooks its equally vital role as a medium through which national mythology is celebrated and reaffirmed. As the link between myth and the feature story emerges through illustration, so does the inescapable role of the journalist as myth-maker. (Author/HOD)

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QUALITATIVE STUDIES
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THE FEATURE STORY AS MYTHOLOGICAL ARTIFACT

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To understand American literature is to understand American mythology. Literature has recorded and shaped our national psyche from earliest colonial times and continues to do so today. In his study, Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860, Richard Slotkin marks this historically unique interaction of literature and myth, "Printed literature has been from the first the most important vehicle of myth in America, which sets it apart from the mythologies of the past."[1]

Noting that the colonies were founded in the age of printing, Slotkin describes that age's impact on settlers:

> Since America turned readily to the printed word for expression and the resolution of doubts, of problems of faith, of anxiety and aspiration, literature became the primary vehicle for the communication of mythic material, with the briefest of gaps between the inception of an oral legend and its being fixed in the public print.[2]

Journalism as a literary form, is also a vehicle of myth. Like the novelist and the poet, the journalist is a creator of what Slotkin calls the "artifact of myth--the narrative."[3] Narratives, of fiction or fact, express the traditions and metaphors of a particular culture. They transform archetypal myths, fundamental to all of humanity, into cultural myths unique to that culture. For example, Richard Dorson, in America Begins, lists several themes found in the narratives of America's earliest journalists: "the economics of trade, the religion of providences, the

folklore of demonism," and relates how these themes shaped "the great myth-images of America: a land of boundless reaches, a commonwealth personally blessed by God, a fabled frontier alive with marvels."[4] And Slotkin speaks of the American writer as the "intelligent manipulator of media and artifacts" who, "controls and directs the developments of myth, "limiting or augmenting its power to induce the mythopoetic affirmation in its audience."[5]

The archetypal hero myth, or monomyth, common to all cultures, has emerged as the myth most illustrative of the American experience. The heroic quest is "perhaps the most important archetype underlying American culture,"[6] according to Slotkin, and appears in American literature in countless variations.

When we consider Campbell's definition of myth as "traditional metaphor addressed to ultimate questions,"[7] the journalist's role as interpreter and perpetuator of the myth of the heroic quest becomes a critical factor in Americans' translation of myth into action and action into myth. For journalists, intelligent manipulators of media and artifacts that they are, appreciate the potency of metaphor as well as anyone who takes pen to paper. And because of their concern with what is occurring "now," they mold and renew the monomyth in a much more immediate way than those writers who require long periods of reflection for mythic expression. Journalists are ever ready to bend information into the mythological artifacts that appear in the newspaper. And as

Slotkin stresses, mythic artifacts must bend to evolve with the cultural myths they articulate:

> The legends and stories we commonly call myths are simply the artifacts of the myths, and they retain their mythic powers only so long as they can continue to evoke in the minds of succeeding generations a vision analogous on its compelling power to that of the original mythic poetic perception.[8]

But several scholars of journalism who recognize the literary character of the news stop short of acknowledging what Seymour Krim calls journalism's "mythic propensity."[9] Although she relates recurring motifs in the news to those in folklore and fiction, Helen MacGill Hughes does not consider the cultural archetypes that those motifs symbolize. News repeats itself, she contends, not as a process of mythological affirmation, but because "human experience, though varied, is endlessly duplicated, and an individual's unique career is a type when numbers of people are considered."[10]

Recalling stories written while a police reporter in Newark, Robert Darton cannot bring himself to carry the idea of news as story to its ultimate mythical source either, "Of course it would be absurd to suggest that newsmen's fantasies are haunted by primitive myths of the sort imagined by Jung and Levi-Strauss. . . ."[11] Tom Wolfe, as well, cannot reconcile realism and mythological artifact as mutually inclusive components of the feature article. His opinion is voiced in the imaginary monologue of a spiteful "Neo-fabulist" whose only defense against new journalists and realism is to "return to those most elemental and pure forms of story-telling, the forms of which literature itself has sprung, namely,

myth, fable, parable, and legend."[12] Wolfe concludes that while they may have come first, myth and fable, "never stood a chance, once more sophisticated techniques were discovered as a printed literature developed."[13]

Michael Schudson identifies two journalisms in suggesting "a connection between the educated middle class and information and a connection between the middle and working classes and the story ideal."[14] Admittedly, the Daily News and the New York Times differ greatly, but Schudson's linking of the educated middle class with information alone ignores the universal need for myth, and the mythological artifacts that appear daily in all newspapers. The refined, erudite tones of the Times may disguise its mythic propensities, but cannot stifle its inherited techniques of storytelling, through which stories have "reached the New York Times from Mother Goose."[15] (Examples of mythic stories appearing in this paper are in fact culled from another member of the elite press, the Washington Post.)

Nor does Raglan, a renown scholar of myth, regard journalism and myth as a dynamic entity. In The Hero, he argues that myth and history (of which journalism is an instrument) are mutually exclusive. History is "the recital in chronological sequence of events that are known to have occurred,"[16] whereas tradition, including myth, relies on "folk memory", is orally transmitted and consequently is inaccurate. Raglan concludes, "The rapidity with which

historical events are forgotten shows how unlikely it is that what is remembered in the form of tradition should be history."[17]

But as the concept of news as story develops, journalism's mythic propensity emerges. Comparing news stories with fairytales, Tuchman makes the connection between news and myth, "Both draw on the culture for their derivation. . . Both take social and cultural resources and transform them into public property: Jack Kennedy and Jack of beanstalk fame are both cultural myths, although one lived and the other did not."[18] Elaborating on these two myths, Tuchman suggests that news stories and fairytales are more alike than not: "Drawing on cultural conventions, members of Western societies impose distinctions between stories about the two men that obscure their shared features of public character and social construction."[19]

In their study of news and mythic selectivity, Lawrence and Timberg speak of the inseparable course of heroic news and cultural myth. Only upon consideration of the idiosyncratic mythic traditions of a culture can we grasp "the selectivities and conventions through which news acquires its heroic story forms."[20] They assert that "The news industry and the entertainment (mythic) industry are part of the same confluent cultural stream, the latter exhibiting features that are peculiar to Americans."[21] They conclude that mythic adequacy, the "degree to which the features of

an event conform to the pre-existing features of a mythic paradigm,"[22] is an important measure of newsworthiness.

A sense of timelessness, the process of repetition, and the affirmation of enduring values are common qualities of myth and the feature story. In the same way that "Once upon a time" invokes the timelessness of a fairytale, another form of mythical archetype, Tuchman observes that a lead invokes the timelessness of a news story, "ultimately both the fairytale and the news account are stories, to be passed on, commented upon, and recalled as individually appreciated public resources."[23] Not under the same structural constraints as a news story, a feature story may even begin, "Once upon a time. . . ."

Campbell's notion that myth is "symbolic of the play of eternity in time"[24] calls to mind the ideas of George Herbert Mead and William Stephenson regarding the newsreading experience. Mead speaks of the "realm of the reverie," a timeless, dream-like state, that conjures "imagined enjoyable results" in the minds of news readers, and which "dictates the policy of the daily press."[25] Stephenson describes "quiet absorption in the news" as "more like being in a trance than being in touch with reality."[26] Reverie, trance, play of eternity in time: all suggest a similar state in which past, and future are suspended for the temporal experience of mythic, and thus cultural renewal.

Myth and news are repeated as they are continuously transformed to comply with cultural modifications.

Repetition serves to reaffirm and restate the values found in myth and in narrative. Speaking about the development of narrative literature, Slotkin states that "repetition is the essence of [the] process" by which "the problems and preoccupations of the colonists became transformed into 'visions which compel belief' in a civilization called American."[27] Similarly, James W. Carey notes that in reading a newspaper, "nothing new is learned but in which a particular view of the world is portrayed and confirmed."[28]

In Mead's discussion of the nature of aesthetic experience, he describes history as a pattern that repeats itself in mythology and in the mythological artifacts that eternalize mythology, "All history is the interpretation of the present, that is, it gives us not only the direction and trend of events. . . but it offers us the irrevocableness of the pattern of what has occurred, in which to embody the still uncertain and unsubstantial objects we would achieve."[29]

Mead's description of history resembles Slotkin's description of myth as "essentially conservative." Like the "irrevocableness of the pattern of what has occurred," myth's source of power is "its ability to . . . invoke and relate all the narratives (historical and personal) that we have inherited, ..."[30] The feature story, as narrative and as mythological artifact, contains the code that dictates and perpetuates the pattern of history.

Although Wolfe argues that realism lies far from the realm of myth, we shall see how the realism of reporters' renderings of an urban odyssey, of a feisty paraplegic's violent death, and of a tragically flawed heroine, draw us closer to the structure of the monomyth. The dialogue, and the everyday behaviors--the realism--of tramps on the street, of a man who "lived by some code derived from hugging the ground,"[31] and of a refugee from Siberia, recast our abiding myths in contemporary forms. It is important to remember Slotkin's precept that a culture's mythology is vigorous and enduring only as long as its artifacts evolve with the culture. Through realism, national myths speak in a contemporary, idiomatic voice that echos our culture. And so, the myths still breathe.

The relationship between journalism and myth artifact is best viewed through Wheelright's definition of mythic development as described by Slotkin. There are three stages of development; "primary," "romantic," and "consummatory."[32] The primary stage establishes our mythic consciousness, while in the romantic stage, "the attainment of an original experience of mytho-poetic insight into the nature of reality becomes less important than fulfilling the social obligations established for the myth and for the priests who keep and ritualize it.[33] The consummatory stage is characterized by the artist's ability to act "as prophet, rather than as priest or ministrant to his people, shaking minds and hearts with new visions rather than providing

customary balm for normal social and personal anxieties."[34] The consummatory myth-maker reenvisions, "the cultural archetypes that lie behind the variegated surface of his culture's myth-media."[35]

Journalism's pliancy lends itself structurally to all stages of mythic development. Features that read like the early journals of our primary myth-makers, like the legends and sermons of romantic myth-makers, like the epics of consummatory myth-makers are the result of the literary freedoms of new journalism. But journalists are essentially romantic myth-makers, the priests who 'fulfill the social obligations established for the myth.'[36] They sustain the status quo as they justify the "philosophical and moral values which may have been extrinsic to the initial experience but which preoccupy the minds of the reading public."[37]

In his introduction to The Unembarrassed Muse, Nye points out that the popular artist's product "must show a profit"[38] and so he cannot afford the risk of being anything but a romantic myth-maker. The popular artist, "corroborates. . . values and attitudes already familiar to his audience; his aim is less to provide a new experience than to validate an older one."[39]

Washington Post reporter Neil Henry's chronicle of his experience posing as a bum on the streets of Baltimore and Washington, is the work of a romantic myth-maker, although he imitates the style of both primary and consummatory

myth-makers. For a modern audience, Henry recreates the heroic quest, which as Slotkin says is "among the first coherent myth-narratives formulated by a culture."[40]

Henry's odyssey, as he terms it, was an assignment, not a matter of survival, or of revelation. He is neither creator, nor prophet. Henry retells a myth to suit our time, but provides no new vision or insight that steers our mythic course in an uncharted direction. Just the same, as hero of his own story, and as a black man exploring the life of urban vagabonds, Henry adds an interesting and relevant twist to the myth of the heroic quest. His quest is made even more absorbing in light of what Slotkin has to say, "at the source of the American myth there lies the fatal opposition, the hostility between two worlds, two races, two realms of thought and feeling."[41] Although he refers to the conflict between white man and Indian, Slotkin's words hold true for the conflict between whites and blacks on another frontier.

In Part I of the series, Henry establishes his Homeric role with a litany of the trials he would endure, and of the fellow travelers he would encounter:

> The Helping-up Mission is where I spent the first two weeks of an urban voyage as a homeless derelict. During this journey, which ended nearly two months later in Washington, I scavenged for food and sought shelter wherever it was available. . . . I met men and women who later would be involved in robberies, murders and other crimes of passion and desperation. . . .
>
> My pockets were empty, but my mind was swimming with intense feelings of adventure and fear.[42]

Employing most of the literary techniques that Wolfe claims free the writer from myth--scene by scene construction, dialogue, third person point of view,--Henry leads us through a mythic underworld and emerges as an initiate into manhood; out of the cold and into his girlfriend's toasty apartment.

On the street, Henry captures the language, behaviors, and philosophies of an array of vagrants, as do other epic heros who meet companions on the road. His myth encompasses the fugitive myths of those who never knew the American dream, as illustrated in his conversations with a fellow bum named Willie which took place on the heating grate they called home. After waking up from a night on the grate, during which he got no respect from rats or passersby, Henry recalls, "I felt weak from hunger and yet almost superhuman."[43] He sees himself as a superhuman, a hero, having survived a hellish night.

But Henry's adventure as it parallels Slotkin's description of quest, does not champion the cause of his street friends as much as it would appear. The "threat of some natural or human calamity" Slotkin describes is the threat of bums to the average Post reader's way of life. As romantic myth-maker, "ministrant to his people," Henry reassures his audience that the tramps pose no threat; they are sad, eloquent men about whom more should be done, but they are harmless should you [the reader] accidently step on

one. In the end, Henry, as priest, gives his audience what they want to hear.

At the conclusion of his quest, Henry runs into Allie, a wanderer with many heroic qualities of his own. Allie, alone, discovers Henry's identity, and that is only right. Amid the litter and fray of back alleys, it takes one hero to know another. We learn Henry has made it through the fire--as a confederacy of heroes is born.

Another example of the realistic treatment of myth in the Washington Post is the account of the life and death of Hobart Wilson, a paraplegic, and as the headline charges: "Hell on Wheels." Reporter Chip Brown makes the most of Wilson's singularity in the tale of his demise. But again, it is romantic myth, the retelling of an old story in modern form in which myth is reestablished, to conform to contemporary society, but is not reenvisioned.

The story opens like a traditional ballad, sung from one generation to another:

> They laid Hobart Wilson in the ground last week. The people who stuck by him--his mother, his wife, his boy Junebug and a handful of other kin--slid the metal coffin over the tailgate of the family's two-tone pickup truck. Then they drove all night in the rain with the body, 500 wet and winding miles from a small brown house in Silver Spring to a grave beside Wilson's father in Harlan County, Ky.[44]

The techniques of new journalism recreate for a contemporary audience the broadside ballad, which, "enjoyed a long history that began when the folksong was first set in type for sale and ended when the newspaper brought the masses stories based on the news."[45]

Wilson was regarded as "garbage" by others than friends and family; even so, "he was one of a kind, a man of the fiercest pride, a poor, white country boy known as one of the most notorious characters in Montgomery County."[46] Paralyzed as a child when he fell from a tractor, Wilson is an amalgamation of American types: he is an antihero admired for his disreputableness, ("His grotesque and comic history of roguish feats would be an achievement even for a hellion who could walk."):[47] he is a trickster, robbing buildings and leaving behind the "weird, grocery-cart wheel tracks"[48] from the skateboard-like contraption on which he propelled himself. He is also a consummate American, an "adamantly self-reliant man,"[49] who rejects proffers of help and pity. As such an American, Wilson is a descendent of the frontier hero, Daniel Boone: "lover of the spirit of the wilderness, [whose] acts of love and sacred affirmation are acts of violence against that spirit and her avatars."[50] But Wilson departs from Boone in a notable way. On Wilson's arm was a tattoo that said, "Born to Lose." And sure enough, as a paraplegic with legs as thin as "drumsticks," the subject of gawks and smirks, Wilson's retaliations, his violent acts of "love and sacred affirmation" only destroyed him and the stranger he crashed into at 100 mph. Daniel Boone was reborn through acts of violence. Wilson, in his ultimate act of violence, dies. In life and in death he was in the wrong lane.

Whether or not he realizes it, Brown is telling us about the chances for survival of the Hobart Wilsons in the suburban wilderness outside D.C. And as a romantic myth-maker, Brown, like Henry, tells an enthralling tale without toppling his readers' values.

Felicity Barringer's tale of the life of Tamara Wall, "Flight from Sorrow," also from the Washington Post, roughly parallels Raglan's criteria for the "Story of the Hero of Tradition"[51] and as such is a unique portrayal of a contemporary heroine and her quest. Like the hero who is "spirited away"[52] after an attempt on his life, Tamara Wall was exiled from her native land, Germany, sent to a Siberian labor camp, and eventually to England as a refugee. There, she was raised by a young woman of no relation to Wall, following the pattern of the hero who is "reared by foster parents in a far country."[53] Wall eventually joined her father in Oregon, and remained silent on the subject of her past, like the hero about whom "we are told nothing of his childhood."[54] Barringer describes Wall's silence which she maintained throughout her life in Washington, D.C.:

> Her double life was not a matter of conscious duplicity, but one of willful forgetfulness. In Washington, Tammy Wall had found the perfect place to hide herself. She lived in a city that demands little in the way of a past, asking only a present, and perhaps a future.[55]

The hero, "on reaching manhood returns or goes to his future kingdom."[56] Similarly, Wall arrives in Washington at 22 and it is as if she had been "newly conceived." While the hero, "after a victory over the king and/or a giant,

dragon, or wild beast, marries a princess. . . and becomes king,"[57] Wall takes on Washington, works her way through law school, marries, and receives her law degree. Like a king she commands a large audience of admirers, and as a lawyer she "prescribes laws"[58] as does the king until, like the hero who "loses favor with the gods and/or his subjects, and is driven from the throne and city."[59] Wall is fired from her position as assistant counsel on the House Education and Labor Committee after accompanying Adam Clayton Powell on a controversial European excursion.

The hero "meets with a mysterious death"[60] as does Wall who dies of cancer at 47. And as is the case of the hero whose 'children do not succeed him,'[61] Wall's daughter, Cynthia, cannot succeed her as intellectual, lawyer, socialite. She is mentally disabled and is incapable of success by Washington standards.

Wall's story is a fascinating account of a heroine with more than one tragic flaw. Her determination to overcome ghosts from the past and hardship is patterned on one form of the heroic quest--the American success story. But as an individual attracted to the political dynamics of Washington, her story is decidedly not the story of the man or woman on the street, but one who has succeeded in a professional, upper-middle class, white world. And that, in the eyes of the reporter is what makes the story so unique. And that as well, is what separates the life of Tamara Wall from the lives of most others.

As a romantic myth-maker, Barringer spins an engrossing tale, but its significance for the majority of Washington is limited. When the series ran, it was avidly read, but no one could understand why it appeared in the first place. Had it been more than a good story, had it been a relevant story that mirrored the experiences of Washington's diverse population, its appearance would not have been as puzzling. In the following discussion of problems that arise when myth frames news, Lewis Lapham names loss of identity as a result of reading so many stories that do not reflect one's own life.

At worst, romantic myth-makers warp the original significance of myth, resulting in the corruption of the "faiths, and values that were inherent in the original mythopoetic experience."[62] It is the journalist as romantic myth-maker that Lapham fears in his essay, "Gilding the News." He believes pressure is placed on the journalist to satisfy "the desires of an audience that pays for what it wants to hear and stands willing to accept the conventions proper to its place and time."[63] The outcome is a "mythopoetic interpretation of the facts;"[64] in other words, deceit:

> If the media succeeds with their spectacles and grand simplifications, it is because their audiences define happiness as the state of being well and artfully deceived. People like to listen to stories, to believe what they're told, to imagining that the implacable forces of history speak to them with a human voice. Who can bear to live without myths?[65]

Lapham asserts that our need for myth has been exploited by the media to the point where an individual may be "tricked into believing that he has no story of his own."[66] He suggests that as a people without a story we are fodder for the romantic myth-maker/journalist, "The resulting loss of identity leads to the familiar chronical of confused conflict, which in turn can be reprocessed into tomorrow's broadcast or next year's best-selling novel."[67] Darton adds to Lapham's theory with his own criticism, "newspaper stories must fit cultural preconceptions of the news. Yet eight million people live out their lives everyday in New York City and I felt overwhelmed by the disparity between their experience, whatever it was, and the tales that they read in the 'Times.'"[68]

Lapham's critique should not be disregarded; certainly questions and confusions arise when we subscribe to our myths at twenty cents a day, and when consumed, cast them on a yellowing pile. But in demanding a journalistic standard unconfined by cultural astigmatism, he overlooks the newspaper's other function. It is not only a conveyance of information, but a dynamic medium which reflects and reaffirms our mythopoetic vision in every issue. Whether consciously or not, a journalist reconstructs mythology as he constructs a feature story. Because his work is bound and shaped by the "great myth-images of America," the journalist's role as myth-maker is inescapable.

The examples presented in this paper demonstrate that even the techniques of news gathering and dissemination are derived from ancient forms of mythic narrative. Henry, emulating Homer, handicaps himself with a vow of poverty to collect the wealth of experience he would shape into Odyssean form. His destitution, unlike Homer's handicap, is not real, but it admits him to a world otherwise inaccessible. (George Orwell, another inspiration to Henry, also underwent self-imposed poverty to be and to write Down and Out in Paris and London.)

Brown's narrative imitates the oral tradition and recalls a rich heritage of mythic ballads. Although Hobart Wilson did live, his life seems as fanciful and incredible as those depicted in earlier ballads. In a sense, the facts of his life are immaterial, for the myth of Hobart Wilson, like other myths, will live on regardless of its verity. Whether or not a feature story is true is less important than the myth it perpetuates, to the dismay of Lapham and to the delight of those who seek entertainment and cultural affirmation as well as information in their newspaper.

Barringer did not disguise herself to find her story, nor did she consciously imitate the oral narrative tradition to recreate myth. But she did immerse herself in the tale of a woman whose experiences were remarkably true to the pattern of the heroic quest. In Tamara Wall's story we not only see the inevitable union of myth and the feature story, but the unity of myth and life.

In preserving a particular world view, the journalist as romantic myth-maker frequently passes over the lives of those who do not prescribe to that view in word or in deed. While it is reasonable to seek the stories of consummatory myth-makers whose visions encompass those lost and neglected in romantic myths, it is not reasonable to expect their appearance in the daily press. Myth, as it appears in the newspaper, is a commodity[69] supplied according to public demand. Consequently journalism, as a vehicle of myth, will continue to update and revise the artifact of myth in a purely romantic, diverting form.[70] The public does not usually demand startling and revolutionary visions with its morning coffee. But recognition of myth as a commodity does not minimize the undeniable and potent presence of mythological artifact in the newspaper.

Footnotes

[1]Richard Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860 (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), p. 19.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., p. 8.

[4]Richard Dorson, America Begins (New York: Pantheon, 1950), p. 12.

[5]Slotkin, p. 15.

[6]Ibid., p. 10.

[7]Quoted by Richard L. Greene in "Myth and Criticism," unpublished manuscript, Wesleyan University, September 1967, cited by Slotkin, p. 14.

[8]Ibid., p. 8.

[9]Seymour Krim, "The Newspaper as Literature/Literature as Leadership." In Donald Weber (ed.) The Reporter as Artist: A Look at the New Journalism Controversy (New York: Hastings House, 1974), p. 183.

[10]Helen MacGill Hughes, News and the Human Interest Story (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1940), p. 211.

[11]Robert Darton, "Writing News and Telling Stories," Daedulus, (Spring 1975), p. 96.

[12]Tom Wolfe and E. W. Johnson, The New Journalism (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 41.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Michael Schudson, Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1978), p. 89.

[15]Darton, p. 193.

[16]Lord Raglan, The Hero: A Story in the Construction of Reality (New York: The Free Press, 1978), pp. 5-6.

[19]Ibid.

[20]John Shelton Lawrence and Bernard Timberg, "News and Mythic Selectivity: Mayaguez, Entebbe, Magadishu," Journal of American Culture, II (Summer 1979), p. 323.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid., p. 328.

[23]Tuchman, pp. 5-6.

[24]Joseph Campbell, The Flight of the Wild Gander (South Bend: Regnery/Gateway, Inc., 1979), p. 16.

[25]George Herbert Mead, "The Nature of the Aesthetic Experience," in A. J. Reck (ed.), The Selected Writings of George Herbert Mead (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), p. 302.

[26]William Stephenson, The Play Theory of Mass Communication (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 51.

[27]Slotkin, p. 20.

[28]James W. Carey, "A Cultural Approach to Communication," Communication, 2 (1975), p. 8.

[29]Mead, p. 298.

[30]Slotkin, p. 14.

[31]"Hell on Wheels," The Washington Post, June 6, 1981, p. A1.

[32]"Semantic Approach to Myth," in Sebeok Myth: A Symposium," pp. 155-56, cited by Slotkin, p. 12.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid., p. 13.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid., p. 12.

[37]Slotkin, p. 20.

[38]Russell Nye, The Unembarrassed Muse: The Popular Arts in America (New York: The Dial Press, 1970), p. 6.

[39]Ibid., p. 4.

[40]Slotkin, p. 10.

[41]Ibid., pp. 10-11.

[42]"Down and Out," The Washington Post, April 27, 1980, pp. A1, A18.

[43]"Down and Out," The Washington Post, May 5, 1980, p. A18.

[44]"Hell on Wheels," The Washington Post, June 6, 1981, p. A1.

[45]Hughes, p. 149.

[46]"Hell on Wheels," The Washington Post, June 6, 1981, p. A5.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Slotkin, p. 22.

[51]Lord Raglan, "The Hero of Tradition," in Alan Dundes (ed.) The Study of Folklore (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 145.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid.

[55]"Flight From Sorrow: The Life of Tamara Wall," The Washington Post, May 31, 1981, p. A2.

[56] Raglan, p. 145.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid.

[60]Ibid.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Slotkin, pp. 12-13.

[63]Lewis H. Lapham, "Gilding the News," Harper's, July 1981, pp. 32-33.

[64]Ibid., p. 33.

[65]Ibid., p. 37.

[66]Ibid., p. 39.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Darton, p. 1982

[69]The notion of myth as a commodity is not new. Ralph Waldo Emerson noted the connection between myth and profit in his Journal, "We cannot say what is our mythology. We can only see that the industrial, mechanical, the parlimentary, commercial constitute it." Journal of Ralph Waldo Emerson, p. 383, cited by Harold Schechter, "Introduction: Focus on Myth and American Popular Art," Journal of American Culture, 2:2 (Summer 1979), p. 210.

[70]Harold Schechtor, "Introduction: Focus on Myth and American Popular Art," Journal of American Culture, 2:2 (Summer 1979), p. 210.

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